

HOWIE GARBER: I'm Dr. Howie Garber. I'm an emergency doctor living in Salt Lake, and I'm here representing over 400 physicians and 2000 citizen members of Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment. No one is paying me to be here. We're a nonprofit group with a focus of improvement air quality. The current coal leasing program is a dinosaur. It gives unfair economic advantage to an industry that greatly contributes to global warming and to air pollution. The climate crisis is recognized in the medical community as the greatest public health crisis of our time. A hotter world is already become a world of more virulent infectious diseases. West Nile, lime disease, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, zika, and malaria are just a few of the many infectious diseases spreading far beyond their previous geography. Insect-born diseases never before seen in the United States such as zika are now here. Zika causes small brains in children of pregnant women exposed to it. Coal-fired electricity contributes the single largest amount of global warming pollution of any industry. My understanding is that the Federal Coal Program is 13 percent of U.S. greenhouse gases. Subsidizing coal on public land allows it to be shipped to countries that are already struggling with air pollution crises. This is pushing the world's climate closer to the two degrees Celsius temperature increase above which there would be wide-scale, irreparable damage to the earth's natural systems. These are some of the healthcare costs of burning coal. The emission from coal plants are the major source of sulfur dioxide, second only to automobiles as sources of nitrogen oxide and particulate matter. NOx also is also a precursor of ozone. The emissions of all the coal-powered plants in this country have been calculated by the American Lung Association to cause about 25,000 premature deaths every year or an average of 30 to 50 deaths per plant per year. Coal-powered plant pollution is responsible for half a million asthma attacks, 16,000 episodes of conic bronchitis and 38,000 nonfatal heartaches every year. This pollution increases the annual healthcare bill by about \$170 billion according to the California EPA. The American Heart Association and the American Lung Association state that air pollution on average shortens the life span of everyone one to three years. No one escapes the consequences of air pollution. 47,000 Utah children live within 30 miles of a coal power plant. Please look at the 2015 USGS report of toxic mercury concentration in the Colorado River. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to recognize that this mercury comes from coal-fired power plants near Price, Utah, and Page, Arizona. Thank you.